Nurturing
Pillars
of Society

Understanding and Working
with the Young Generation in Hong Kong

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Contents

1

Who Are 'Young People'?

The question posed in this chapter's title seems to be an easy one. Age criterion is usually used to define young people. For example, in Hong Kong the social welfare community defines children and youth as those aged 6 to 24; the Youth Charter defines young people as those 15 to 24 + or -5. In the United States, "young people" generally refers to people aged 6 to 30. But a criterion related to mentality is also used at times. This means those who are regarded as thinking as young people, even though they may be well outside the age criterion. Equally, a person's energy level may be applied as a criterion. Those who are energetic and have physical strength and stamina may be regarded as healthy young persons—again, even if they are well over the age criterion. Adolescence, the period of youth, is regarded as a transitional period (Atkinson et al., 1990; Coleman and Hendry, 1990). This is to say it is the period of transition from childhood to adulthood. In this period, the young person will experiment with different behaviours for learning purposes, so that he or she will be more competent to face and handle events in the future. With the development of the education system, that is with more years of formal schooling, the period of adolescence has been prolonged.

We can use different perspectives to define and understand "young people". There are, for example, the physiological, psychoanalytical, socio-psychological, lifespan developmental, and integrated perspectives (Steinberg, 2004). We can also simply view young people as biological beings, psychological beings, or social beings. But most appropriately, we need to understand young people from an integrated perspective, taking into account several of those just noted—that is, young people are to be seen as bio-psycho-social beings.

■ Young People as Biological Beings

Being biologically young is regarded as a stage of rapid physical growth and development (Armstrong and Welsman, 1997). We usually refer this stage of an individual's life as the period of adolescence. Increases in height and weight, an increase in the secretion of hormones that results in mood change, a change of voice (especially for males), and changes of body structure and functions (Paikoff and Brooks-Gunn, 1991) are common and discernible characteristics in this period of time. Some scholars (Gesell et al., 1965) thus favour a biological orientation in the study of young people. They see changes in the behaviour of young people mainly from the perspective of their biological and physical evolution in the period of adolescence. Buchanan et al., (1992) also see the hormonal changes in adolescence as an essential determinant of emotional and behavioural problems.

Puberty

This term is closely associated with adolescence. It is the period when sexual maturation and most secondary sexual characteristics become obvious, e.g., the appearance of pubic hair, the enlargement of breasts in girls, and the growth of the penis and testicles in boys. But at exactly what age puberty begins varies. Both internal and external factors will influence when a young person enters puberty (Eveleth and Tanner, 1990). Genes and hormonal secretion are definitely some internal determinants of the period of puberty. Nutrition, health care, and living conditions are among the external or environmental factors influencing the occurrence of puberty.

Hormones

The secretion of hormones is a factor that determines the onset and conclusion of puberty. The pituitary gland, located below the brain, is essential in regulating growth (Petersen, 1988). When the time comes, the brain will send a signal to the pituitary gland, which will further regulate the secretion of certain hormones—androgens in young men, and estrogens in young women. With the secretion of hormones, the height and weight of an adolescent increase.

Growth spurts

A growth spurt signifies unusually rapid physical development of an adolescent (Tanner, 1991). It is an accelerated rate of growth in height and

weight. Adolescence, or the period of a growth spurt, is a time when height, skeletal structure, muscle and fat development, and bodily weight undergo rapid change (Coleman and Hendry, 1990). The brain, heart, and lungs of a young person also grow rapidly during adolescence . Nutritional needs during a growth spurt are high, and studies indicate that severe undernutrition in infancy has long-term, undesirable effects on the development of an individual through adolescence (Eveleth and Tanner, 1990).

Sexual maturation

Due to hormonal secretions, adolescents mature rapidly in terms of their sexual capabilities. Although in normal circumstances girls develop earlier than boys (e.g., at age 9), there are individual variations (Brooks-Gunn and Reiter, 1990). There are also differences in the sequence of development of secondary sexual characteristics in boys and girls (Conger and Galambos, 1997). The appearance of hair under the armpits and near the genitals; the growth of breasts, the maturing of the ovaries, and the onset of menstruation; the growth of the penis and scrotum and the capability of erection and ejaculation are all signs of sexual maturation in adolescents. These changes also bring about psychological changes, and they have social implications, as well.

■ Young People as Psychological Beings

Developmental characteristics of adolescents

To employ a psycho-social perspective to define young people or adolescents, meaning those aged 12 to 22 (Erikson, 1953; Newman and Newman, 1987), we must recognise several developmental tasks that they need to fulfill. The main goal in the adolescent period is to develop self-identity; otherwise, identity confusion will result (Erikson, 1953). But this is only one of several developmental characteristics of young people in the adolescent stage (Newman and Newman, 1987; Steinberg, 2004), and here we consider them.

    The search for self-identity: Building a sense of identity is among the important developmental tasks that an adolescent needs to fulfill. He or she wants to answer the question, "Who am I?" Through his or her association with family and peers, this self-identity develops gradually such that one is able to answer the question. He or she will develop unique values, attitudes, and behaviour to manage the eventualities of daily life. Success

in this searching process is essential for the development of a secure role and position in society.

The search for self-worth: It is common that an adolescent will ask, most often unconsciously, "What is the value of my existence?" This search for self-worth is best reflected in the treasuring of praise from peers as to one's usefulness and helpfulness. Searching for self-worth is also an important developmental task since it is from a sense of one's worth that a young person can find motivation and meaning in life.

The search for love: The search for love is another basic developmental need (Lee, 2002a). The need for love can be explained by Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1970). It can be fulfilled through family relations or in the context of the peer group. A hetero– or homosexual relationship that an adolescent enters into can also be taken as a measure of the need to fulfill this need. An adolescent's search for love is further reinforced by the two developmental characteristics previously mentioned—the search for self-identity and the search for self-worth.

The search for a sense of belonging: The desire to be within a group is evidence of the need to belong among adolescents. This, again, can be fulfilled in the family or in peer groups. This "in group" feeling can provide an identity to the adolescent. Belonging to one or more groups can help a young person explore his or her surroundings with support and a sense of security. It also provides a reference point from which the young person can make judgements.

The search for independence and autonomy: It is well known that to search for independence and autonomy is another characteristic of adolescents (Lee, 2002a). Conflicts with parents and teachers usually and quite easily result. Adults commonly comment that adolescents are nonconformist, unruly, and rebellious to an extent that is beyond comprehension. But if we are aware that adolescence is a transitional period leading to adulthood, it is easier to understand the rebellion of the young. This is the process whereby they explore different alternatives to face and handle the events of life.

"Storm and stress" among young people

Given the above characteristics, it is understandable that adolescence is also labelled a period of "storm and stress". This is simply because adults find it difficult to understand the behaviour of the young. As noted, they perceive youthful behaviour as unruly, rebellious, deviant, and uncontrollable. But we must recognise that the storm-and-stress period is one named, coined and defined by adults to "make sense" of adolescence—a period that, in fact,

they cannot make sense of. It is precisely because adolescence is beyond comprehension and control that adults fear it. They therefore try to make sense out of this phenomenon to regain control. This may increase their psychological sense of security, but their need for control is still not fulfilled. No matter how we define a young person or an adolescent, it remains that this is a period of rapid physical growth and psychological development coupled with various social changes. As caring adults, we must understand these changes, gain the trust of adolescents, and provide appropriate guidance to them when needed.

■ Young People as Social Beings

Even a toddler learns and begins to socialise in the first months after birth. With the development of cognition and communication skills, an adolescent will have more chances to socialise with people at home, in school, and among peers. It is through this process that a social and psychological identity is created. It is also through the socialisation process that an individual learns about his or her roles, culture, and society (Tapper, 1971).

Socialisation and self-identity

"No man is an island" is a popular phrase used to indicate the social character of human beings. The learning and mutual influence that occur by way of our encounters with others are termed "socialisation". The earliest moments of socialisation occur within the family (Giddens, 2006). Normally, family remains the most influential socialisation agent throughout one's life. Adolescence, an individual's most receptive years, is the period when a person learns and internalises many values, attitudes, and behaviours that ultimately become his or her own. And it is self-evident that a significant proportion of the values, attitudes, and behaviours that an adolescent possesses comes from the family through the socialisation that begins from early age.

When a young person enters school, it is school that then becomes the main agent of socialisation. It is common to hear young people quoting the words of their teachers and to see them follow teachers as behavioural models—or to use teachers to challenge parents. Leslie (1980) recognised that besides family, schooling is also an important site of socialisation for young people in that it is in school that they learn of values and behavioural standards.

Identification with peers at different levels is also a prevalent phenomenon among young people. It is through this group association process that many of the developmental and psychological characteristics and needs of adolescents mentioned above can be fulfilled. It is not surprising to see adolescent peers with identical hair styles, similar makeup, matching dress, and the same behavioural patterns. These are signs of mutual learning, consciously or unconsciously. We often hear the term "youth subculture", and it signifies the shared culture that young people exhibit. But we should caution ourselves that this term may represent our inability to comprehend the doings of young people. We use the term to label those presentations of the young that we may find hard to comprehend, so making ourselves feel more secure and in control. As social beings, young people have a great desire to learn and model their peers to develop their own identities. The importance of friendship and peers has been well discussed by Coleman and Hendry (1990).

■ Young People as Bio-Psycho-Social Beings

There are several good references for understanding different aspects of adolescents (Coleman and Hendry, 1990; Conger and Galambos, 1997; Steinberg, 2004). But nothing can be comprehensively explained by a single perspective, especially human beings in their sophistication and complexity as a specie. As a conclusion to this chapter, this section is intended to remind us of the need to employ an integrated perspective to understand young people. To employ different perspectives and use them singly to explain the development of young people is useful enough for purposes of clarity. As the development of a young person is a complex issue, however, we cannot attempt to understand the young from any single perspective—biological, psychological, or social. An integrated approach—a bio-psycho-social perspective—should be adopted. That is to say, we need to understand the development of an adolescent from a holistic point of view, as all the changes occurring in an adolescent are mutually influencing one another. Bronfenebrenner (1979) proposes the need to adopt a holistic, contextual perspective to understand the phenomenon. In other words, a system perspective is required to account for a phenomenon. This perspective on young people will be further discussed in the next chapter.

The physiological changes of adolescents will influence their psychological and social development, and the psychological and social changes of an adolescent influence one another. The hormonal secretions in adolescents will lead to their physiological and physical growth, and these

changes will lead to the start of their effort to satisfy the psychological needs mentioned above. Their social behaviour and presentation will then evolve, consciously or unconsciously, and so provide them chances to fulfill their needs. As more social occasions are entered upon, the search for fulfilling such developmental and psychological needs is reinforced.

6

Who Are "Youth-at-Risk"?

Young people who abuse substances, belong to street gangs, drop out of school or may drop out, exhibit antisocial behaviour, and engage in causal sex are regarded as "youth-at-risk" (Dryfoos, 1990). This measurement is quite behavioural. It uses the display of socially unacceptable behaviour to define "at risk".

Groups of youths at risk form naturally in commonly occurring contexts—among peers, neighbours, and schoolmates, for instance, or within triads. They are not formed consciously, and they exist well before the commencement of a youth worker's intervention (Lee, n.d.a). In Hong Kong, youth gangs (groups of youths at risk) are groups of young people, all or some of whom either belong to triad societies, follow them, or have links to them (Lo, 1986).

Luk (2002), an experienced detached youth worker in Hong Kong, classifies four types of indigenous youth groups or gangs of youths at risk. These are groups or gangs in public estates, in schools, in commercial complexes, and at playing fields and leisure playgrounds.

In work done with colleagues (1996) I have identified a three-tier structure among youth gangs: the fringe, the followers (the outer circle with either new or old members), and the inner circle, which is comprised of one or more leaders and core members.

I believe that the social realities of young people determine whether they will face more risks than the others (Lee, 1994a). For example, a young boy (A) who has caring parents and performs favourably in school receives praise from teachers and classmates as a good student and is appointed or elected monitor of the class. By behaving well, he gets the recognition he desires. Another young boy (B) who has working parents and are uncaring and do not provide family supervision turns in to become a student of

unfavourable academic performance. B is frequently scolded by teachers. But this young man is a good fighter and changes girlfriends every fortnight. Even though he behaves badly, he still gets recognition from peers and classmates as "tough" and "smart".

A and B share the same psychological need for peer recognition. But due to the social realities to which each is exposed, they use different behaviour to fulfill this need: A displays socially acceptable behaviour, while B engages in some socially unacceptable, risky behaviour. But both, we must not miss, are young people with the same developmental characteristics and needs. It should be clear now why different social realities will create different degrees of risk for young people. Theoretically, there is no "no risk" youth or adolescent. Each of us has faced or will face various problems during adolescence. The primary reason why some of us have not become "problems" is because we have the resources or the training needed to handle our risks rationally by way of socially acceptable means.

■ A Definition of "At-risk"

McWhirter et al. (1998) provide an adequate description of the phenomenon. They state that "at-risk" means

> (a) set of presumed cause-and-effect dynamics that place the child or adolescent in danger of negative future events… a situation that is not necessarily current but that can be anticipated in the absence of intervention (P. 7).

Early intervention, before a problem occurs, is thus very important. They also suggest an "At-risk Continuum" designating risk levels by category, as shown in Diagram 2 (McWhirter et al., 1998).

Minimal risk	Remote risk	High risk	Imminent risk	At-risk category activity

Diagram 2 At-risk Continuum

Young people with favourable social backgrounds—those from families of high socioeconomic status, who attend good schools, and enjoy loving and caring relationships with families and friends, among other factors—are assumed to be at minimal risk. Those with less favourable demographic characteristics—they are from families of low socioeconomic status or are members of minority groups, for instance—are positioned in the remote risk

category. High-risk youths are those from unfavourable social backgrounds with dysfunctional families and schools; they have negative personal attitudes and emotions and undeveloped social skills and coping behaviour. Young people in the imminent risk category share the characteristics of high-risk youth but also exhibit "gateway" behaviours (e.g., aggression or alcoholism). Young people belonging to the 'At-risk category' basically have all the characteristics of young people in the previous category . They have also engaged in delinquent behaviour: They have dropped out of school, for instance, or indulge in substance abuse (McWhirter et al., 1998: Chapter 1).

McWhirter et al. assign most young people to the minimum risk or remote risk categories. Lesser proportions of the population are placed in the higher-risk categories. However, while we believe that those classified as higher risks are a minority, we do not know the exact figures, and their at-risk behaviour raises significant public concern. It deserves our attention.

■ Services for "Youth-at-Risk"

There are several local welfare services for those who are regarded as at-risk (Lee, 2009). We will consider only two of these here. One is the Youth Outreaching Service, which has operated for quite a long time. The other service, the Counselling Centres for Young Substance Abusers, was established more recently. For a comprehensive review of all local services available to youths at risk, readers may consult the home page of the Social Welfare Department on the internet.

Youth Outreaching Service

As the juvenile crime rate increased drastically in the 1970s, Outreaching Social Work (OSW) (Youth Outreaching Service), a service for at-risk youth, primarily street gangs, was set up in September 1979. The service had been recommended by a government-commissioned study (Ng et al., 1975). Eighteen OSW teams run by non-governmental organisations were each dispatched to a priority area selected on the basis of its youth population, the youth crime rate, and the density of the community.

OSW sends professionally trained social workers to reach out to and establish relationships with young people who are unattached to conventional social systems such as families and schools and who are vulnerable to undesirable influences. Contacts are made in places these youths at risk are known to frequent: street corners, playgrounds, fast-food restaurants, billiard rooms, and so on.

The service's objectives are to identify problems—personal, social, behavioural, emotional—these young people might experience, to enhance their social functioning, and "to provide counselling, guidance, and other forms of service to help them overcome their problems, develop their potential, and become socially re-integrated" (Social Welfare Department, 1999:51). Remedial, preventive, and/or developmental measures are used to guide youths toward more socialised life styles (Hong Kong Council of Social Service, 1988). The size of an OSW team is determined by the population of the community it is serving. At full strength, a small team is comprised of five social workers and a large team twice that number size.

Services for young people develop and change as the society does. In early 2002, there were 34 OSW teams serving different communities in the territory. In September of the same year the government restructured the service. Sixteen District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams or YOTs were formed to serve the youths at risk in 16 large districts (Social Welfare Department home page). YOTs are intended to address the needs of high-risk youths and the problem of juvenile gangs.

The OSW's working stages with clients can generally be classified into three: engagement, helping, and termination. At the engagement stage, social workers usually know clients for a rather short period of time, less than three months. Workers consciously try to establish more trusting relationships to build rapport. In the helping stage, clients have usually established the desired trust, and workers help them articulate their problems and encourage and support them to manage these problems positively by way of various methods. This stage may last two to three years. The final stage, termination, draws the engagement to its conclusion. At this stage, clients are usually able to solve their problems positively. The major focus is on helping clients evaluate and consolidate their learning such that they can transfer what they have gained into other contexts after the helping process ends.

Outreach social workers are required to provide counselling, case management, and other support activities to youths at risk aged 6 to 24. They need to pay spot visits to gather and identify potential cases pro-actively. In addition, depending on the agencies' policies, some of the YOTs are combined with the Overnight Outreaching Service for Young Night Drifters, the YND teams noted in an earlier chapter.[1]

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1. At present, there are 18 Overnight Outreaching Social Work Teams in the territory to serve young night drifters. The establishment of these teams was based on the findings of a commissioned study (Lee and Tang, 1999) that indicated that there were 10,000 to 20,000 YNDs outdoors in the territory each night.

Counselling Centres for Young Substance Abusers

Substance abuse has long been a social problem in Hong Kong. Before the late 1980s, the incidence of substance abuse was characterised by the prevalence of heroin addiction (Cheung and Cheung, 2006). However, in recent years the popularity of heroin has declined due to an increasing preference among the young for psychotropic substances. The number of reported psychotropic substance abusers has steadily increased from 2,238 in 1994 to 3,493 in 1999 (Narcotics Division, 2003). The rapid spread of these drugs might be associated with the popularity of rave parties and discos in the late 1990s (Lam et al., 2004; Ngai et al., 2006). The problem of cross-boundary substance abuse also brings new challenges due to the lower price of drugs and easier drug distribution on the mainland (Chan and Chung, in press; Lau, 2003). Ecstasy, ketamine, cannabis, and amphetamine are the most popular substances abused by young people (Narcotics Division, 2007). The proportion of ketamine abuse rose from 0.1% in 1997 to 72.8% in 2002, while ecstasy abuse rose from 2.3% to 35.9% in the same period (Narcotics Division, 2006).

The development of Counselling Centres for Young Substance Abusers

From institution-orientation to community-orientation

In the past, the government adopted a multi-modality approach in providing treatment and rehabilitation services for substance abusers. These included a compulsory placement scheme, a voluntary out-patient methadone treatment programme, and a voluntary out-patient programme run by NGOs and some Christian therapeutic agencies (Narcotics Division, 2006). These services tended to be institution-orientated rather than community-orientated, and they were intended mainly to help heroin addicts. An institution-oriented approach is beneficial for rehabilitation because addicts experience strong withdrawal symptoms, both physically and psychologically. However, it may not be the most effective way to help young psychotropic substance abusers, as most of them take illicit drugs for recreational and social purposes.

The rising rate of psychotropic substance abuse in the 1990s aroused a lot of public concern, which prompted the government to provide additional resources to address the various needs of drug abusers. Three counselling centres for psychotropic substance abusers (CCPSAs) were established in different districts in the late 1990s: the Caritas HUGS Centre in New Territories West, Hong Kong Christian Service PS33 in Kowloon West, and Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service Cheer Lutheran Centre in

New Territories East. These centres used a community-based approach in rendering individual and group counselling services to young substance abusers, as well as by organising various prevention programmes.

From fragmented services to one-stop service

The gravity of the problem and the changing mode of substance abuse among young people in the early 2000s produced a shortage of manpower and a heavy workload among the existing CCPSAs. To meet the demand for therapeutic and rehabilitation services, two more CCPSAs were set up, one on Hong Kong Island operated by the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals CROSS Centre and one in Kowloon East by the Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service Evergreen Lutheran Centre, respectively. The total number of CCPSAs was thus expanded to five. Meanwhile, the Against Substance Abuse Scheme operated by the Social Welfare Department, which had organised community-based prevention programmes for occasional abusers, was terminated in 2002. The resources were reallocated to the CCPSAs with a view to strengthening drug prevention programmes for secondary school students and offering more accessible services and early interventions to potential substance users.

To offer one-stop service and strengthen the collaboration with other NGOs, the CCPSAs were granted additional resources to provide outreach services in 2008. It is expected that they will build coalitions with the YOTs and YND Teams to visit "black spots" in the territory and approach youths aged below 21. Indeed, the establishing of the of CCPSAs helps with pooling different resources and targeting young substance abusers in a comprehensive manner. They gain experience in offering counselling services, drug prevention programmes, and outreach services, as well as training programmes for other youth workers. These experiences are important to the development of an integrated, multidimensional, dynamic, and strategic model for effective substance abuse counselling and education. In the future, two additional CCPSAs are to be established. (Narcotic Division, 2008).

The operations of Counselling Centres for Young Substance Abusers

Although the five CCPSAs rendering treatment and rehabilitation services adopt different working approaches, they all provide non-residential services for young drug addicts (Narcotics Division, 2007). The principal services include:

Rehabilitative services for helping young substance abusers abstain from taking drugs and encouraging them to develop healthy lifestyles and achieve positive development patterns. These services include assessment,

matching of modes of detoxification , relapse prevention, and individual and group counselling.

Preventive education programmes to enhance awareness among secondary school students of the harmful effects of substance abuse. Potential or occasional substance abusers are identified and receive a series of follow-up services, such as workshops and group encounters. If necessary, individual counselling is offered to help them beyond drug-taking habits and regain confidence in school life.

Counselling services and support programmes for helping family members of substance abusers in the course of treatment and rehabilitation. These comprise individual and family counselling, mutual-support groups for parents, and parent education programmes.

Outreach services to help young people below 21 who frequent black spots as a result of undesirable peer influences. Practitioners establish close ties with other youth-service providers in the community in response to common concerns about young substance abusers.

*Training programme*s for related professionals to prepare them to work with potential, occasional, and habitual substance abusers. Consultations and inquiries are also offered to persons or agencies in need.

As noted, the CCPSAs were set up by pooling various resources to provide one-stop services for young psychotropic substance abusers in different districts. Presently, there are 10 to 12 professional workers in each centre, including 0.5 to one supervisor, one centre-in-charge , and 8 to 10 frontline social workers. Some centres have mobilised additional resources to employ specialists such as clinical psychologists to enhance their competency in conducting assessments and providing psychotherapeutic services. As for effective management and operations, some centres have reorganised services on the basis of small teams. For instance, a counselling team will be formed to render individual and group counselling, while a school team will deliver preventive education programmes in schools. Some centres have also set up small teams to work in different communities with their service boundaries.

10

Youth Crime in Hong Kong

There are several ordinances in Hong Kong that provide behavioural guidelines. And there are ordinances defining the status of various people. For example, Chapter 226 of the Ordinances , the Juvenile Offenders Ordinance, says that a person under 10 who commits a crime is assumed to have no intention (*Mens Rea*) to act illegally and therefore has no criminal responsibility. Those aged 10 to 15 who are convicted of an offence are termed "juvenile offenders". Convicts aged 16 to 20, are "young offenders", and those 21 to 25 are "young adult offenders". Here we will consider juvenile offenders and young offenders as the same in that, most of the time, juvenile offenders are also young offenders and vice versa.

The process of becoming a juvenile or young offender involves a certain process. A young person commits acts suspected of being illegal, the acts are reported, the suspect is arrested, he or she admits or denies guilt, the police prosecute on the basis of evidence, and court proceedings lead to conviction and sentencing. Decisions made during this process depend on various factors. Bottomley (1973) points out that they are influenced by policing styles, community reactions towards certain crimes, the counting rulers adopted by the police, the collection of evidence, and the attitudes of suspects.

■ The Situation of Youth Crime

While critics assert that official statistics can be misleading and are therefore unreliable as a basis of analysis (Huff, 1993), it is interesting to reflect upon what the figures reveal about how Hong Kong society views youth crime. With many crimes of various kinds committed daily, it is difficult

to classify them. We usually refer to the categories used by police, who have 10 classifications of reported crimes: (1) violent crimes against person; (2) violent crimes against property; (3) burglary, theft, and handling stolen goods; (4) fraud and forgery; (5) sexual offences; (6) serious narcotics offences; (7) offences against lawful authorities; (8) serious immigration offences; (9) miscellaneous crimes; and (10) preventive crimes.

Most juvenile crimes are petty: the shoplifting of low-value goods, for example (Gray, 1991; Vagg et al., 1995). Gray (1991) comments that behind the question of juvenile crime and the methods of treating it in Hong Kong lie "moral panic", efforts to divert attention from economic problems, and having a net-widening effect.

Table 4 shows the number of juveniles and young people the police arrested for various crimes from 2003 to 2007.

As the table indicates, about 4,700 juveniles and about 5,300 young people were arrested per year during the period surveyed. The average percentage of young people (juveniles + young persons) arrested was about 24% each year. This figure is alarming. We can make at least two observations. First, burglary and theft, primarily shoplifting, accounted for the highest number of arrests in all years. Counting shoftlifting as a minor crime, most offences committed by young people were petty in nature. This confirms the assertions of Gray (1991) and Vagg et al., (1995). Second, gender is a factor. In all years, more males than females were arrested. Interested scholars and those sensitive to gender questions may further explore the reasons for this pattern.

As noted previously there are several factors that affect the reporting of crime statistics and the penal process (Bottomley, 1973), and these also apply in Hong Kong. Here we can consider a simple equation:

Arrested = Released + Prosecuted + Cautioned

Arrest figures cannot, therefore, be taken to reflect the prevalence of crime or equal the crime figures.

■ The Causes of Juvenile Delinquency

As a matter of foundational knowledge, let us consider some basic ideas as to the causes of juvenile delinquency (crime and deviance). There are two schools of thoughts in criminology on this point. The classical school believes in the free will of individuals; the positivists takes a determinist view of human action. The former believes that delinquency reflects human nature and individual moral standards: People are free to decide themselves

Table 4 Juveniles and young persons arrested

Year	2003				2004			
Categories of Crime/Arrested	**J**		**YP**		**J**		**YP**	
Person (Sex)	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
1. Violent Crime vs. Person	696	154	1111	84	687	111	1060	87
2. Violent Crime vs. Property	439	876	468	32	400	120	417	37
3. Burglary & Theft	1756	1084	1331	550	1768	936	1314	525
4. Fraud & Forgery	26	5	149	47	21	6	134	50
5. Sexual Offences	55	0	146	4	55	0	161	6
6. Serious Narcotics Offences	28	16	331	79	31	8	363	97
7. Offences vs. Lawful Authorities	23	12	60	14	13	14	41	16
8. Serious Immigration Offences	6	2	34	44	1	10	38	44
9. Miscellaneous Crimes	570	48	1213	94	558	41	1089	102
10. Preventive Crimes	136	3	211	16	114	3	217	14
TOTAL	*3735*	*1421*	*5054*	*964*	*3648*	*1249*	*4834*	*978*
TOTAL POPULATION ARRESTED	*42051*				*42991*			
Year	2005				2006			
Categories of Crime/Arrested	**J**		**YP**		**J**		**YP**	
Person (Sex)	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
1. Violent Crime vs. Person	690	160	957	87	717	172	944	111
2. Violent Crime vs. Property	265	61	286	33	346	70	339	14
3. Burglary & Theft	1555	1003	1029	504	1488	848	1036	482
4. Fraud & Forgery	27	7	84	62	27	13	140	53
5. Sexual Offences	67	1	126	25	62	2	128	24
6. Serious Narcotics Offences	27	11	199	45	41	11	329	73
7. Offences vs. Lawful Authorities	20	12	46	17	21	6	44	17
8. Serious Immigration Offences	3	3	37	64	6	11	30	34
9. Miscellaneous Crimes	460	80	941	75	509	54	910	89
10. Preventive Crimes	77	2	152	11	101	5	160	17
TOTAL	*3191*	*1340*	*3857*	*923*	*3318*	*1192*	*4060*	*914*
TOTAL POPULATION ARRESTED	*40804*				*42228*			
Year	2007							
Categories of Crime/Arrested	**J**		**YP**					
Person (Sex)	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**				
1. Violent Crime vs. Person	738	189	970	99				
2. Violent Crime vs. Property	336	73	204	15				
3. Burglary & Theft	1492	761	963	388				
4. Fraud & Forgery	32	15	155	72				
5. Sexual Offences	90	5	166	6				
6. Serious Narcotics Offences	86	25	667	144				
7. Offences vs. Lawful Authorities	16	20	52	21				
8. Serious Immigration Offences	8	7	32	19				
9. Miscellaneous Crimes	576	93	852	87				
10. Preventive Crimes	73	9	107	12				
TOTAL	*3447*	*1197*	*4168*	*863*				
TOTAL POPULATION ARRESTED	*42940*							

Legends: **J –** Juveniles (10-15)   **YP –** Young Persons (16-20)   **M –** Male   **F -** Female
(Source: Hong Kong Police Annual Reviews)

how they will behave. Positivists believe, conversely, that delinquency is determined by factors beyond the individual's control (Vold, 1979). They assert that we need to conduct scientific investigations to understand the causes of deviance.

Positivist thinking allows for three different perspectives in accounting for the occurrence of crime (Bartol and Bartol, 1998; Kornhauser, 1978; Shoemaker, 1990). The causes they propose are not limited to young offenders, as is our topic, but can generally be applied to people of all ages. These three perspectives are the biological, the psychological, and the sociological.

The biological perspective

In taking up the biological perspective of crime, we must take note of Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909), an Italian criminologist, who is considered the father of criminology. His studies led him to believe that there were "born criminals". He elaborated that criminals are a kind of biological throwback to an earlier evolutionary stage: They are more primitive and savage than the non-criminals. So criminals are thus a reversion (Lombroso, 1912; Vold, 1979). Lombroso's studies also indicated that criminals have some specific attributes that he termed "atavistic". They include:

- Deviation of the shape and size of the head (big or small) from the type common to the criminal's race and region;
- Asymmetry of face;
- Excessively large jaw and cheek bones;
- Eye defects and peculiarities;
- Ears of unusual size—commonly large but occasionally very small; they also stand out from the head, resembling those of the chimpanzee;
- Nose twisted, upturned, or flattened in thieves, or aquiline or beak-like in murderers, or with a tip rising like a peak from swollen nostrils;
- Lips fleshy, swollen, and protruding;
- Chin receding, or excessively long, or short and flat, as in apes;
- Anomalies of the hair, marked by characteristics of the hair of the opposite sex;
- Defects of the thorax, such as too many or too few ribs, or supernumerary nipples;
- Excessive length of arms;
- Supernumerary fingers and toes;
- Imbalance of the brain (skull);
- Inversion of sex characteristics in the pelvic organs.

Lombroso's studies were later attacked because they were based on examinations of the corpses of soldiers.

Another frequently quoted study was one conducted by E.A. Hooton, an anthropologist active in the 1900s . He studied 17,000 subjects, of whom about 14,000 were prisoners; the rest were a non-criminal control group. The major findings of his study were these:

- Criminals are organically inferior;
- Crime is the result of the impact of environment upon low-grade human organisms;
- In 19 out of 33 measurements, there was "a significant difference between criminals and civilians";
- "Criminals in all offence groups were inferior to civilians in nearly all their bodily measurements";
- Discernible physical distinctions—low foreheads, excessive nasal dilation, compressed faces, narrow jaws, long, thin necks, sloping shoulders, and the like—are common in criminals;
- Physical inferiority is primarily associated with mental inferiority;
- The probable causes of inferiority are hereditary and not environmental;
- Dark eyes and blue eyes are deficient in criminals;
- Tattooing is more common among criminals than civilians;
- Thin lips and compressed jaw angles occur more frequently among criminals than non-criminals;
- The ears of criminals tend to be small;
- Murderers and robbers tend to be tall, thin men;
- Killers are usually tall heavy men;
- Thieves and burglars are usually undersized men;
- Rapists are usually short, heavy men.

As we consider the physical features of criminals , the body-type theory proposed by William Sheldon (Sheldon, 1949) must also be noted. He suggested that there are three body types among men: endomorphic (round and fat), mesomorphic (big and muscular), and ectomorphic (slim and short). He further suggested that those with criminal tendencies have a mesomorphic body type.

Charles Goring (mid-1800s to mid-1990s) applied statistical measurements to detect the relationship between heredity and criminality and found that there was a link between fathers and sons; but he discerned no relationship between criminality and environment (Goring, 1972). He postulated that the interaction between the person (heredity) and environment would result in crime.

The studies of identical twins and fraternal twins conducted by Johannes Lange (mid-1800s to mid-1900s) found a 77% rate of imprisonment among 13 pairs of identical twins and a rate of 17% among 17 pairs of fraternal twins. (Lange, 1929). Among 214 pairs of ordinary brothers, who served

as the control, the rate was 8%. A study done by Newman, Freeman, and Holzinger in 1937 found that of 42 pairs of identical twins, one considered juvenile delinquent, 93% cases of the other twin being judged the same. And of 25 pairs of fraternal twins, 20% cases of the other twin being judged the same.

The XYY Chromosomal Complement Study by Jacobs, Brunton and Melville (1965) must also be reviewed briefly. They discovered that criminals had XYY chromosomes and were taller (averaging 6 ft. 1 in.) and more aggressive than the average among non-criminals. But the studies of Price and Whatmore in a maximum security hospital in 1967, and Sarbin and Miller in 1970 found the opposite. They found that persons with XYY chromosomes were less violent and aggressive. Hunter (1966) suggested that people with XYY chromosomes may be taller and of larger build and so tended to appear frightening to others—and so were more apt to face discrimination in courts and among psychiatrists.

The psychological perspective

Another perspective that belongs to the positivist school takes a psychological view of crime. Adherents believe that unresolved traumas in the development process of an individual will induce behavioural problems. They believe variously that the lack of proper parental care (a psychoanalytic theory), problems in moral development (a moral development theory), or disturbances in the formation of the personality (a personality trait theory) are the fundamental causes of deviant behaviour. Dudycha (1955) suggested that faulty learning patterns, conflicts between personal drives and society, the stability of the home environment, parent-child relationships, and styles of parental supervision have significant influences on delinquent behaviour among young people. He further pointed out that juvenile delinquents desire to escape from restraints, experience adventure, and find oblivion (forgetfulness). Their home life is dull, emotionally cold, and full of conflicts. Shore, in a 1977 article entitled "Psychological Theories of the Causes of Antisocial Behaviour" in *Crime and Delinquency*, pointed out that juvenile delinquency occurs as a consequence of imitation and identification. Juvenile delinquents want to acquire identities. Even it is a negative identity, it is a defense against no identity. They generally have low self-esteem and so are more susceptible to delinquency. Any programme geared toward crime prevention must therefore be comprehensive and multidimensional.

Lamson (1986) stated that juvenile crime is due to various reasons. These include identity problems, the sudden breakdown of rigid control,

impulse-ridden pleasure seeking, a low toleration of frustration, immature personality, inadequate personality development, lacking parenting consistency, and family crises.

The sociological perspective

The development and popularity of the biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives of crime are in chronological order. From the sociological perspective, the causes of deviance and delinquency are related to external social systems—the family, peers, community and society, culture, law enforcement, the economy, politics, and so on. Several theories share the sociological perspective. These include the zonal theory (ecology), the anomie theory, subcultural theories, the differential association theory, interactionist/labelling theories, environmental theory, push-pull theory, and the political economy theory.

The zonal theory

This is also called the theory of the human ecology of crime, as developed by the Chicago School in the 1950s. Park, Burgess, Shaw, and Mckay (Park et al., 1925) were the thoery's principal advocates. The zonal theory proposes that people in a given community have symbiotic, or interdependent relationships and that society expands through "invasion", "dominance", and "succession"—one organic community replacing another. This expansion originates at the centre and moves gradually outward to form concentric circles. The theory postulates the expansion of these circles such that they form five zones. First, the loop, is the central business district; the second, which has the highest crime rate, is called the area in transition and is invaded by the central business district and by industrial areas. It is the oldest section of the city, and the residential sections in this zone are deteriorating and expected to be torn down. The zone is also occupied by the poorest residents—recent migrants. The third zone is where working people's homes are located. Those who can afford to escape from Zone 2 live here. The fourth zone is one of single-family houses and more expensive apartments. Zone 5 is the commuters' zone. It consists mainly of suburban areas and satellite cities and contains the most preferred places to live. Each of these five zones is growing, in the zonal theory, and thus is gradually moving outward into the territory occupied by the next zone. This is the process of invasion, dominance, and succession. Diagram 3 illustrates the locations of different zones.

Zone 1: Loop
Zone 2: Zone in transition
Zone 3: Working people's homes
Zone 4: Residential zone
Zone 5: Commuters' zone
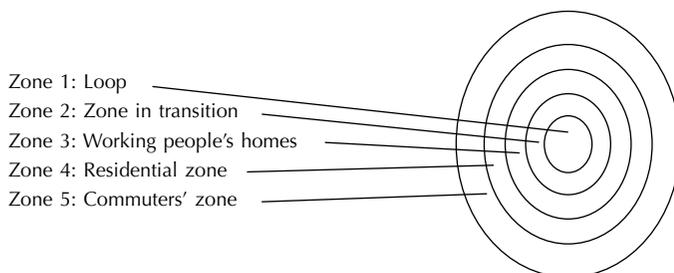
Diagram 3 Locations of different zones

The anomie theory

The scholars who proposed this theory were Emile Durkheim and Robert K. Merton (1800s-1900s). "Anomie" means lawlessness or normlessness (Durkheim, 1933; Merton, 1968). This theory holds that society progresses to a state of anomie wherein people have no laws or norms to follow and hence enter into delinquency. Merton suggested that there are "cultural goals" to which we aspire and there are also legitimate "institutional means" for achieving these goals. Those who do not have these means acquire "modes of adaptation". He proposed that there are five such modes, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Modes of adaptation

Cultural Goal	Institutional Means	Mode of Adaptation
+	+	Conformity
+	-	Innovation
-	+	Ritualism
-	-	Retreatism
+/-	+/-	Rebellion

Legends: **+ –** For **- –** Against
(Source: Merton, R.K. (1968). **Social Theory and Social Structure**. New York: Free Press.)

Subcultural theories

Cohen, Cloward, and Ohlin proposed that delinquency is a lower-class behaviour. "Delinquent boys" (Cohen, 1955) from this class learn and internalise this subculture and so act deviantly. But why, then, do some boys from the lower class not become delinquents? Cloward and Ohlin (1960), in their opportunity theory, suggested that it is a matter of whether they are provided or exposed to opportunities. They further suggested that there are three types of gangs in delinquent subculture. They are the retreatist gangs (e.g., drug addicts), the conflict gangs (usually juvenile gangs), and the criminal gangs (adult criminals).

The differential association theory

Edwind Sutherland proposed this theory in 1939. He believed that all behaviour, including criminal behaviour, is learned. The display of criminal behaviour depends on the peer group one associates and learns from. If the peer group favours law-violating behaviour, one naturally becomes delinquent through the association; the inverse is also true. There are nine assumptions that this theory rests upon:

a. Criminal behaviour is learned.
b. Criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
c. The principle learning occurs within intimate personal groups.
d. Learning criminal behaviour includes (a) learning criminal techniques and (b) absorbing motives, drives, rationalisations, and attitudes.
e. Motives and drives are learned from definitions of the legal codes as favourable or unfavorable.
f. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law compared with definitions unfavorable to violation of law.
g. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
h. The process of learning of criminal behaviour by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.
i. Criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values; non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values.

Interactionist/labelling theories

The representative scholar of these theories is Becker (1963). Advocates of these theories believe that the interaction between suspects and law enforcement agents is significant for stigmatisation of the former—that is, suspected criminals acquire negative labels in the course of such interaction. Law enforcement agents thus play a significant role in the labelling of criminals. The process involves a series of "status degradation ceremonies". Suspected criminals acquire negative labels ("bad", "deviant", "antisocial", "unruly", "nonconformist"), a self-fulfilling prophecy may result. In the process, "secondary deviance", rather than "primary deviance"—the committing of deviant acts—is emphasised, and social isolation may result. This will encourage those labelled criminals to accept a deviant status and so become still more susceptible to the labelling process. A vicious circle forms. Labelling, we must finally note, involves a variety of social, cultural, psychological, and physiological factors.

The environmental theory

Environmental Criminology, a book edited by Brantingham and Brantingham in 1981, explains this theory comprehensively. It asserts that there are several participants in the criminal phenomenon: the offender, the victim, and law enforcement authorities. There is also the act itself—another component. Additionally, social and physical components may induce a criminal act. The social environment brings to bear factors that predispose someone to commit a crime, and the physical environment makes it easier to do so. The latter suggests the significance of an environment's physical design in crime prevention (Lee, 1992).

The push-pull theory

In previous work I have asserted that this is the most relevant theory to explain why young people commit crime in Hong Kong (Lee, 2002b). The theory recognises the significance of socialisation agents (family, school, peers, mass media, specialised groups) in teaching and inducing attitudes and behaviour among young people. In daily encounters, various others may exert different pushing and pulling forces on the young people, which result in either conformity or deviance. For example, the family and school may exert pushing forces; peers, mass media, and specialised groups such as gangs and triads may exert pulling forces. In this push-pull dynamic, deviance or crime, especially for youth-at-risk, results. In a later section, we will elaborate on the relevance of this theory in accounting for youth crime in Hong Kong.

The political economy theory

Karl Marx (1906) , Frederick Engels (1973), Quinney (1970), Chambliss, Chambliss, and Seidman (1971) represent this perspective. In simple terms, this theory assumes that the occurrence of crime is rooted in society's political and economic structure, and delinquency occurs and continues to occur as a consequence of class domination. Capitalists and powerful politicians make laws to protect themselves and the benefits accruing to them and to oppress the powerless working class. Either reform or revolution is the way forward, and a classless society is the ultimate goal.

The causes of youth crime in Hong Kong

As noted in Chapter Two (and illustrated in Diagram 1 of the chapter) the push-pull theory is best in accounting for youth crime in Hong Kong. In ***Hong Kong Youth Problems in the Early 21st Century—the Phenomena,***

Analyses and Solutions (2002a), a volume I edited, there is a chapter elaborating this theory.

In applying the theory, I have suggested the psychosocial needs of young people are the foundation of this theory (Lee, 2002b). From the psychological perspective, there are several developmental tasks that youths need to fulfill. They include the need to develop self-value, to seek self-identity, to seek a sense of belonging, and to search for freedom, autonomy, and independence. It is because adults lack an understanding of these needs of adolescents, they refer this period as "storms and stress" since they cannot comprehend the needs and behaviour of young people. But the behaviour of the young in seeking to satisfy these needs in fact reflects their involvement in different social realities (Lee, 1994:36).

From a sociological perspective, we know that an individual is influenced by different socialisation agents. The major agents include family, school, peers, mass media, and some specialised groups such as scouts and guides, the Red Cross, junior police call, and Triads and gangs. Socialised by these agents, an individual gradually forms values, beliefs, social views, life views, attitudes, behaviours, and habits.

Family

A related study suggests that family is a support system for the development of young people (HKFYG, 6.1994). And still another study points out that many parents in Hong Kong expect their children to achieve well academically (HKFYG, 7.1997). The reality in Hong Kong is that more and more parents work to support their families. Care and supervision of children are consequently inadequate. Communication and relationships with parents will be considerably worse for the youth-at-risk, who may feel that the parents' main concern is their academic performance and not their physical and emotional needs. Another study points out that when young people face difficulties, they talk to their friends and classmates but not parents, whose concerns and traditional thinking they consider to be different (HKFYG, 3.1996). In the context of this alienation and the absence of emotional caring, night drifting (Lee, 2000) and other forms of deviant and antisocial behaviour may reflect the desire to gain attention. As a socialisation agent, the family in contemporary Hong Kong society acts as a pushing force, encouraging young people, especially youths at risk, out of the system.

School

Given the dysfunctional role families play as socialisation agents, school, where most young people spend most of their time outside the family, might

play a compensatory role. But in contemporary Hong Kong, most schools also put emphasis on academic achievement. The pressure and frustration arising from school work and examinations are enormous. If teachers stress academic performance, how can they have the time to concern with the emotional needs of students? A study reveals that most young people, except in matters related to academic problems, do not approach teachers to seek help (HKFYG, 8.1996). As noted in an earlier chapter, good and bad students come under the same pressure. The former have to work hard to keep up with the highest standards, while the latter are given unfavourable labels, and teachers and schoolmates look down on them. Those in between know that no matter how hard they try they are unlikely ever to reach the top of the class but that if they slacken their academic performance will drop. So as a whole, school is a failure-generating system. How can young people find identities and a sense of belonging and achievement in school? As one of the main socialisation agents, it, too, pushes young people out of the system.

Peers

Of similar age, with similar interests, with the same developmental tasks to fulfill, and with similar family and schooling situations, peers will naturally become a system wherein young people will approach one another for mutual sharing and support. A study reveals that peers constitute a group conducive to the sharing of feelings (HKFYG, 12.1995). It is not difficult to imagine young people get emotional support and tangible help from peer groups. They have strong cohesion. From social learning theory, we understand that mutual learning and influence are considerable among peers. But they face similar problems and may use some inappropriate ways to solve them. These inappropriate ways to handle problems spread easily. Some deviant and antisocial behaviour—truancy, running away, joining gangs or Triads—can be learned, even as they worsen problems instead of solving them. But we must recognise that peer groups exert a pulling force upon young people and so are, psychologically speaking, attractive.

Mass media

Mass media, such as TV, movies, radio stations, comic books, and magazines are also among the socialisation agents to which the young are frequently exposed. The unconscious influence of the media gradually affects values, attitudes, and behaviour. Especially for young people, who are developing their self-identity, values, and attitudes, the influence of the media cannot be neglected. Businesses in Hong Kong use the media to spread the ideas

of materialism and hedonism. Everything is geared toward immediate gratification, short-term enjoyment, and utilitarianism. As youths have enormous spending power, they are natural targets for these businesses. In the subtly attractive way products are packaged, the messages are not obvious but, instead, come gradually to dominate the minds of young people. They thus buy not only the product but the message attached to the product and the advertising that supports it. Subliminal messages also gain popularity through the dynamics of peer influence. A study reveals that 75% of the young people surveyed had contact with pornography (HKFYG, 11.1994). This is another measure of the broad influence the media have among young people. So do mass media exert a pulling force upon the young that promotes identification and learning.

Specialised groups

Specialised groups refer to volunteer groups, scouting and guide groups, gangs and Triads, and other groups that affect the development of young people. As the context of this discussion is youth crime, specialised groups here refer to those exerting negative influences. The main difference between gangs and Triads and ordinary peer groups is that the formers are already immersed in deviant or antisocial subcultures. The containment theory proposed by Reckless (1969) suggests that the criminal subculture of gangs is a pulling force encouraging young people to commit crimes. A local study supports this (HKFYG, 5.1993). The claimed emphasis on "brotherhood" in gangs and Triads and the need for protection make them refuges for some young people. But once young people join these groups, the negative influences and modeling to which they are subjected are powerful. These specialised groups offer young people psychological or practical protection (even if it is for a very short time) and save them from perceived risks. So they are a pulling force, attracting young people to join them.

At this stage we may naturally ask: Is youth crime in Hong Kong due to "youth-at-risk" or "society-at-risk"? In an article published in 2005, Chiu offers useful elaborations on the phenomenon. There are three possible answers to this question: The problem is due to youth-at-risk, society-at-risk, or both (with different weightings).

Youth crime may reflect personal pathologies. In these cases, youth crimes are due to youth-at-risk. In instances where there are faulty social policies, youth crimes are mainly due to society-at-risk. But most of the time, both youth and society have faults, and thus both are responsible for the occurrence of youth crimes.

■ Preventive Measures

It has often been said that prevention, especially early prevention, is better than cure (McWhirter et al., 1998). There are two service programmes, one run by the government and one by NGOs, that take this pro-active approach. The government programme is offered through the police department. It is the Police School Liaison Scheme (PSLS); and some NGOs provide a programme called Outreaching Service. They will be introduced in the following sections.

The Police School Liaison Scheme

The PSLS was launched in 1974 and is based on the concept of community policing, which was quite popular in the 1970s (Fielding, 1995; Miller and Hess, 1998 & 2005; Oliver, 2000; Schaffer, 1980; Trojanowicz et al., 1998). The Scheme reflects the belief that a harmonious relationship with the community will help the police to fight crime and in prevention work. Police in different countries have developed various strategies to foster good community relations. The PSLS was part of the Hong Kong Police Force's effort to build cooperative relations with primary and secondary schools for the detection and prevention of youth crime.

In the Scheme, dedicated police officers were appointed as School Liaison Officers (SLOs) to maintain contacts with schools, provide advice, and organise activities. With the inception of the Neighbourhood Police Coordination Scheme in 1984, SLOs also assumed the role as neighbourhood police coordinators to develop community relations (http://www.info.gov.hk/police/hkp-home/english/pprb/schlia/ slossloprg.htm).

As the problem of youth crime gradually increased in the 1980s and so generated public concern, 26 SLO posts were re-established in August 1988. "As part of a comprehensive programme of support services for youth at risk, 33 Secondary School Liaison Officer (SSLO) posts at sergeant rank were created in August 2001 to strengthen police commitment in juvenile crime prevention work" (http://www.info.gov.hk/police/hkp-home/english/pprb/schlia/slossloprg.htm).

The web-site just noted lists the objectives of the PSLS:
a. to establish good relations between the police and the school community—children, teachers, and parents;
b. on the basis of these relations, to give schoolchildren an understanding of the role of the police and a respect for law and order;
c. to make schoolchildren aware of the various dangers they may encounter, such as involvement in crime, drug abuse, triad association, hooliganism, sexual temptation and abuse, and road traffic;

d. to alert school children and school authorities to the need for crime prevention in all its aspects;

e. to instill a sense of discipline and positive values in schoolchildren at risk through group or individual discussions;

f. to refer suitable cases to the relevant multi-agency programme for follow-up action, in consultation with social workers, school management, and parents;

g. to act as the focal point of contact on behalf of the police force's community relations officer between local police and district social welfare offices as well as the school management.

All newly appointed and potential SLOs and SSLOs have to attend a training programme, the School Support Liaison Course, for six and a half days, as organised by the public relations office of the police.

Police engaged in the PSLS are to help schools "to instill a sense of responsibility, moral values, and personal discipline" (http://www.info.gov. hk/police/hkp-home/english/pprb/schlia/slossloprg. htm) in their students. The main roles of the SLOs and SSLOs include these:

a. advise school management as to the enforcement of the law in cases of unruly behaviour;

b. conduct group and individual discussions with school children at risk to instill positive values and a sense of discipline;

c. after discussion with school management and parents, refer suitable cases to relevant multi-agency programmes for follow-up action;

d. give lectures on crime-related topics including drugs, Triads and related issues to strengthen students' awareness with a view to preventing them from falling prey to bad elements.

(http://www.info.gov.hk/police/hkp-home/english/pprb/schlia/slossloprg. htm)

Depending on specific circumstances and the creativity of responsible police officers in different communities, various activities are developed to actualise the aims of the PSLS and the roles of the SLOs/SSLOs. The basic work of these officers includes holding talks with students, teachers, and parents; running workshops for teachers; advising school management on how to handle unruly students and issues related to order and security, and interviewing unruly students. The Police Community Relations Officers' Manual (PPRB, n.d.), offers a list of PSLS practices:

a. formal lectures to target groups;

b. discussions with groups or individuals either formally in a classroom or at random in the school halls and on the grounds;

c.   case studies;
d.   special project publicity;
e.   informal visits by patrol officers;
f.   organising, participating in, and supporting sporting, social, and outdoor pursuits;
g.   arranging visits to police stations, other police establishments (e.g., the PTS), and police social functions (e.g., beating retreat);
h.   organising JPC school clubs;
i.   developing recreational activities with themes such as fighting crime or developing education and character;
j.   exhibitions.

The PPRB manual, suggests that SLOs and SSLOs will maintain regular contact with officers of the District School Support Team to co-ordinate school liaison, activities in a concerted approach to achieve optimal effect and productivity.

A responsible public relations officer has said that there is no plan for future development of the Scheme at this stage. But the police will monitor its progress through monthly meetings of SSLOs and reviews of the Scheme when needed.

The PSLS is one of a few pro-active interventions launched in the 1970s to prevent juvenile crime. With a history of more than 35 years, review and planning for future development are necessary. Although the image of the Hong Kong Police Force is as a rather reactive organisation given to passive responses to crime, this Scheme helps promote a pro-active image, at least in the case of juvenile crime. Further strengthening and promotion of the Scheme may be necessary to convey the desired image of the police to the public.

The Outreaching Social Work service

The OSW (already introduced in Chapter Six, so here is only a brief description of the service) is another pro-active measure for tackling youth crime. This service was proposed in the White Paper "Personal Social Work among Young People" (Hong Kong Government, 1977). The service was implemented in September 1979.

As the juvenile crime rate increased drastically during the 1970s, with the recommendation of a commissioned study by the Government (Ng et al., 1975), outreaching social work aimed at youths at risk, who were primarily members of street gangs was formally adopted as a strategy by the government. Based on youth crime rates, youth populations, and

population density, 18 priority areas were initially selected as the service communities of OSW teams run by various NGOs. The OSW service engaged in a systematic helping process in which professionally trained social workers were to reach out to and establish contact and relationships with targeted youths at risk in places they were known to frequent. The service objectives of OSW are to identify the problems (personal, social, behavioural, emotional) that these young people might experience and to enhance their social functioning and coping abilities to manage these problems through remedial, preventive, and/or developmental measures so they could regain pro-social life styles (Coordinating Committee on Outreaching Social Work, 1988). By early 2002, the OSW service developed 34 teams of various sizes.

As society develops and changes, so must the services for young people. In September 2002, the government restructured the OSW service. Sixteen District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams (YOTs), each with 10 trained social workers, were formed (and run by 11 NGOs) to serve 16 large districts of the territory (Social Welfare Department home page).

YOTs are established to address the needs of high-risk youth and to tackle the issue of juvenile gangs. Outreach social workers are required to provide counselling, case management, and other support activities to individuals and natural groups of young people aged 6 to 24. They have to work pro-actively outside the office most of the time. In addition, some of the YOTs are combined with the Overnight Outreaching Service for Young Night Drifters (YNDs) teams by individual arrangement of operating agencies. The staff of these teams work overnight shifts.

Index